

BE-LONGING FOR IT: A DIGITALLY ANIMATED HARM REDUCTION AND PEER NARRATIVE PROJECT ABOUT MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN WHO USE METHAMPHETAMINES.

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Introduction / Issues OR Introduction and Aims: Methamphetamine use is a significant contributor to HIV transmission risk in Men who have sex with Men (MSM) in Australia. 35% of Australia's MSM living with HIV (LHIV) use methamphetamines and almost 11% of the broader MSM population. This compares to 2% of the general population.

Be-Longing For It is a community arts based early intervention project, utilising digital animation to share a range of personal narratives. This project seeks to connect MSM and MSM LHIV communities to treatment and support services. Be-Longing For It aims to engage the viewers to reflect on the meaning of connection and intimacy for MSM and MSM LHIV and their relationship to sex and drug use, and empower them with harm reduction education.

The work, based on comic illustrations, explores themes of sexual identity, minority stress, history of trauma, finding community, seeking connection, intimacy, mental health, risk taking behaviours, stigma, drug use, harm reduction, sex, living with HIV and the desire for belonging.

Discussions and Conclusions: The project evaluation found that:

- Using cartoons or digital animations is an effective method to tell stories of drug use.
- The stories can be used as an effective therapeutic tool in counselling sessions or therapeutic groups to motivate change and foster conversations and a deeper understanding of methamphetamine use.
- Harm reduction messaging within the videos were effective and clear.
- The digital animations are helpful for people who might want to get some more information or support to change their drug use.

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